

The US 5 A Day Program: a model for increasing fruit and vegetable consumption

II. The role of the Produce for Better Health Foundation: promoting fruits and vegetables at retail

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A major strength of the national 5 A Day for Better Health Program is its unique partnership with the fruit and vegetable industry and the public health community. This partnership produces a win-win situation. The fruit and vegetable industry must continue to be profitable to survive, and the partnership provides an opportunity to increase sales as well as promote a public good – the increased consumption of fruits and vegetables. For industry, the value of the association with the health community lends public credibility. The public health community is interested in increasing national fruit and vegetable consumption because data indicate that such a change should decrease risks of heart disease, cancer and other chronic diseases. The value of the industry partner to the public health sector is realized in marketing dollars and skills that can effectively reach all Americans with the message to eat five or more servings of fruits and vegetables every day. In addition, the partnership provides an opportunity to modify the food environment to be more supportive of increased fruit and vegetable consumption.

Industry partnership structure

The Produce for Better Health Foundation (PBH) or the Foundation, incorporated in 1991, works directly with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) in this public–

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private partnership. The PBH, a non-profit entity, manages the private-sector side of the national 5 A Day Program and was organized solely for this purpose. The purpose of the Foundation was to sublicense all industry members that wished to participate in the programme, coordinate and monitor their activities, raise funds for and implement industry initiatives and public relations efforts, and collaborate with the NCI to develop a strategic plan and national programme agenda. Initially, the potential industry members consisted of supermarket retailers, growers, shippers, suppliers, merchandisers and commodity boards. Later, producers of frozen, canned and dried products became involved with the Foundation.

The formation of the PBH was a major milestone. Before the Foundation's inception, the industry had not worked collaboratively to increase fruit and vegetable consumption. US produce is fragmented, with over 350 different fruits and vegetables 'competing' for sales in a supermarket at any given time. Before 1991, more emphasis had been placed on how to differentiate products from one another in the marketplace than on how to increase consumption of all products. The PBH is the only organization that promotes the consumption of all fruits and vegetables for better health, uniting the fruit and vegetable industry in a common proactive effort.

Licensing

One of the first and primary functions of the Foundation was to license the industry to use the 5 A Day Program logo. A licence agreement is signed annually, and criteria for use of the logo, promoting products and developing recipes were developed jointly by the PBH and NCI. Initially, industry was to receive the licence without a fee because it would help spread the 5 A Day message. However, attorneys recommended a small fee be paid to make the signed licence agreement more of a binding contract between the Foundation and industry members. Thus, an initial licensing fee was set at \$100 annually. By 1996, the annual fee was \$500. Since 1997, PBH has been charging a fee commensurate with the use of the logo – a greater use of the logo results in a higher fee.

In 1991, 84 members were licensed. This number grew to 488 in 1992 and in 1998, 750 members were licensed. Any misuse of the logo or programme materials as established in the guidelines can result in loss of the licence. Few actions of this nature have been necessary, as the industry has done a good job of policing itself.

The Foundation communicates with its members (i.e. licensees) in a variety of ways, from one-on-one meetings to meetings at trade shows, regular mailings and a home page on the world wide web, <http://www.Saday.com>, which debuted in July 1998. The web site offers information, text and graphics for consumers, journalists, cooks, educators and produce industry members. Members receive access to the 'Members only' section, which provides additional information, plus downloadable text and graphics. Several times a year, members receive materials announcing each of the Foundation's retail promotions. In addition, members receive renewal notices containing a summary of PBH's achievements and future plans.

The trade press has been a vital channel of communication since the beginning

of the programme. Significant efforts have been made in the past few years to work more effectively with the trade press in order to reach the industry. In addition to regular coverage of programme activities, the produce industry trade press donates more than \$150 000 of free advertising space annually in its publications. This additional coverage, both editorial and advertising, has helped to assure that Foundation activities are known to the industry.

Retail point-of-purchase programmes

An emphasis on the use of supermarkets as an important channel for reaching the public continued in the national programme. Beginning in 1991, the Foundation developed and produced promotional materials for retailers, including signs, point-of-sale cards and brochures, three or four times each year. Use of these materials ensured that the 5 A Day message was being promoted according to programme guidelines, which was important for the fledgling programme. Retailers purchased materials from these promotions for use in their shops (Table 1).

The materials produced by the PBH included black-and-white template advertising slicks and slicks of the logo. Retailers used the 5 A Day logo and message in their radio and newspaper advertisements, including shop circulars, in-store intercom announcements, and best-food-day ads. It is estimated that, depending on the market, many of these full-page newspaper advertisements are worth close to \$40 000 in advertising placement purchases.

Initially, about 5000 stores purchased these core programme materials in a given year. As members became more familiar with the programme guidelines, larger retailers began to customize their own 5 A Day promotions to look different from their competitors' efforts. By 1998, only about 1000 stores were purchasing core materials because more retailers were developing their own customized materials.

Table 1 A selection of nationwide Foundation promotions since 1991

1991: Eat More Fruits and Vegetables
1992: Eat More Salads; Easy Entertaining
1993: Fast and Easy; Eat More Salads II; 5 A Day Week; Healthy Gift Baskets
1994: Canned/Frozen Promotion; Fruits and Vegetables – the Fitness Fuel; 5 A Day Week; Make the Play – Eat 5 A Day
1995: Snack Your Way to 5 A Day; 5 A Day Week – Take the 5 A Day Challenge; Microwaving – The Easy Way to 5 A Day
1996: Breakfast: Feel the Get Up and Glow!; Take the 5 A Day Challenge! – It's the Winning Way; Destination Stop
1997: The Original Fast Food; Produce Playground; Take the 5 A Day Challenge! – 5 A Day on the Go!; Make It Fast, Make It Healthy, Make It 5 A Day
1998: Simply Delicious; Naturally Irresistible; Take the 5 A Day Challenge! – Taste a World of Variety; Go Ahead, Have Another

The Foundation and NCI encouraged interactive events in supermarkets to draw attention to the 5 A Day message. Many retailers conduct school supermarket tours and in-store taste tests, and work in other ways in their local communities.

National 5 A Day Week is conducted each September by the PBH and NCI to emphasize the importance of eating five servings of fruits and vegetables each day. Through supermarket promotions, nutrition workshops, media events and other activities, consumers learn about the 5 A Day Program. This annual event has become a regular promotion on many retailers' marketing calendars. Most retailers extend the celebration throughout the entire month of September to reap the benefits of heightened consumer interest in the 5 A Day Program.

As the programme has matured, the PBH has developed new ways of assisting retailers to promote the 5 A Day message. For example, a supermarket's consumer affairs director might download the text of a consumer column from the Foundation's web site and use that information in the supermarket circular or newsletter. At the same time, a produce manager can benefit from cross promotions, a store tour or food-service training.

Supermarket efforts to reach consumers are critical, but grower/shipper efforts to complement these retail activities are also important. Growers use the 5 A Day logo on packaged products. Because most produce items do not have a package, it has been difficult to use the logo on produce items. However, some growers have used 5 A Day stickers on some of their items in addition to their own brand sticker. Commodity boards, trade associations and cooperatives, which represent growers of all sizes, also have done a great deal to support the 5 A Day Program.

Use of mass media

The fruit and vegetable industry uses the media extensively in communicating to the public about its products. Therefore, use of the mass media has been an important part of the 5 A Day Program since its beginning. The PBH and NCI have collaborated in various configurations through the years. The Foundation utilizes diverse methods and media to communicate its message and regularly meets with leading magazine editors to discuss trends and story ideas for future publications. As a result, the 5 A Day Program has received coverage in such magazines as *American Health for Women*, *Bon Appetit*, *Country Living*, *Glamour*, *Good Housekeeping*, *Parents*, *Redbook*, *Savueur*, *Seventeen*, *True Story* and *Woman's Day*.

National 5 A Day Week

National 5 A Day Week, which is held each September, was created to help focus the attention of the licensees and the media on the 5 A Day message. Each year, the Foundation and NCI develop 5 A Day Week promotional materials and distribute them to more than 1200 licensed 5 A Day members. Over the years, the PBH has conducted a variety of activities for 5 A Day Week. In 1993, for example, all 50 state

governors were contacted to enlist their support for 5 A Day Week. All 50 governors issued proclamations in support of 5 A Day, most declaring 5 A Day Week in their states and many setting 5 A Day as a goal for their states. All 537 members of the US Congress were also given a 5 A Day fruit and vegetable basket. Each House and Senate dining room and cafeteria marked 5 A Day Week with special menu items, brochures, banners, posters and produce tastings.

Public service announcements

With the assistance of its public relations firm and the NCI, PBH produced a television public service announcement (PSA) featuring 'Produce Man'. The 'Produce Man' 30-second spot features a character made from real fruits and vegetables who encourages people to eat five or more servings a day. The spot was targeted at women aged 18–54 years – one of the main audiences for 5 A Day. The Foundation expanded the use of the character to reach new audiences through food-service providers, retail outlets, schools, health fairs and media events. Significant for a PSA, the Produce Man promotion exceeded the original investment and persists in adding value over time as it continues to be played. Since the PSA's debut in November 1995, Produce Man has received more than \$12 million in estimated time value (versus \$200 000 in production and distribution costs) on television stations nationwide.

Lessons learned

An undertaking of the magnitude of this public–private partnership produces many lessons. Many good decisions were made; other decisions did not lead to expected outcomes. Below are some lessons learned that may be helpful to programmes in other nations.

One of the best programme decisions was to license the use of the 5 A Day logo. Those who wish to use the logo must follow certain stipulations, sign a licence agreement and pay an annual licensing fee. As the programme has grown in value, so has the annual licensing fee.

From the start of the programme, attempts were made to track industry activities for process evaluation purposes. The growers were good at this. The retailers, however, seldom took the time to complete activity report forms, were difficult to contact via phone, or were in a situation where tracking was difficult for them. It was also difficult to obtain sales information, which is usually proprietary. Initially, the industry was less interested in this information than was the NCI. Finally, the Foundation funded several efforts to assess outcomes, as previously reported. Such efforts are more likely to be successful as a measure of effect than attempting to collect data from retailers.

The PBH staff members have learned effective techniques for stretching dollars in communications. The most effective use of funds is to influence the influencers, that is, to work with magazine food editors, newspaper editors, physicians, the

dietetics associations, and human resource personnel. Fundraising is a particularly difficult issue for the industry, and it requires consistent and appropriate attention from the beginning of the programme.

Conclusion

The environment in which the national 5 A Day Program operates is changing. The produce industry is experiencing a consolidation trend, which presents opportunities and obstacles for the Foundation. The PBH sought to quantify the effectiveness of its programmes by conducting market research, particularly the 'Produce Man' media test and the 5 A Day in-store promotion test. These tests show that 5 A Day promotions can increase produce sales.

Another emerging trend is that a growing number of consumers are seeking healthier meals, which enables the Foundation to capitalize on the 5 A Day message through communication efforts. The PBH continues to develop programmes to reach consumers with current health-related, research-based information. To this end, the NCI's research has helped monitor 5 A Day awareness and produce consumption. Research by the NCI and other institutions also provides the credible scientific link between increased fruit and vegetable consumption and better health.

To maintain financial stability and growth, the Foundation learned that it must apply the proper fundraising techniques. They also realized that the right programmes must be established to attract participants and donors. Since PBH's inception, the organization has followed the advice of its Board of Directors to establish strong programmes. As the programmes became more effective, the financial membership became more diverse. Major donors perceive their participation in the 5 A Day Program as a true partnership. This fosters a long-term investment in the Foundation, which further strengthens the partnership. In collaboration with the NCI, PBH has expanded to provide an integrated set of communications, retail, food service and education programmes. Together, these programmes give participants many of the tools they need to educate consumers about the 5 A Day Program.